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Planning Review

Overview

Existing policies, plans and ordinances that apply to bicycle and pedestrian planning were collected and reviewed as they pertain to the vision of the 2003 ARTS Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which includes the urbanized area of Aiken County.

The vision of the 2003 ARTS Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is “to seek to develop a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that not only identifies projects, but also develops the

framework for a dynamic multi-modal program that can be embraced by the public and easily re-evaluated on a regular basis.”

This appendix provides a review of the goals and objectives of current plans that may affect the goals and issues relevant to the Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Not all local and regional planning documents were reviewed for this chapter; the focus of this review was on existing, locally adopted plans, as well as documents that are of regional significance to Aiken County, South Carolina. Table A-1 summarizes the plans reviewed.

Table A-1. Existing Plans/Policies and Adoption Dates

Jurisdiction	Document Name	Date Adopted
US DOT	Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations Press Release	March 11, 2010
US DOT FHWA	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users	August 25, 2005
SCDOT	Complete Streets Resolution	February 2003
SCDOT	Engineering Directive Memorandum 22, Consideration of Bicycle Facilities	February 2003
ARTS, SC	Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	2003
ARTS, SC	ARTS 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan	June 2010
Aiken County, SC	Comprehensive Plan	2004-2014
Aiken County, SC	Aiken County US 1/US 78 Corridor Study	2011
Augusta, GA and North Augusta, SC	Master Plan for a Sustainable Future: The Westobou Vision	2009
North Augusta, SC	Riverfront Redevelopment District Master Plan	1996



North Augusta, SC	Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan	2003
North Augusta, SC	Community Needs Assessment	2003
North Augusta, SC	Comprehensive Plan	2005
North Augusta, SC	North Augusta Greenway, Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan	May 2011
Aiken, SC	Strategic Plan	2010

National Plans/Policies

United States Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations Press Release Summary March 11, 2010

The following quotes and excerpts from the U.S. Department of Transportation policy statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation summarize elements related to bicycle and pedestrian planning in the ARTS region:

"The United States Department of Transportation (DOT) is providing this Policy Statement to reflect the Department's support for the development of fully integrated active transportation networks. The establishment of well-connected walking and bicycling networks is an important component for livable communities, and their design should be a part of Federal-aid project developments."....

"The DOT policy is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects. Every transportation agency, including DOT, has the responsibility to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to integrate walking and bicycling into their transportation systems."....

"This policy is based on various sections in the United States Code (U.S.C) and the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) in Title 23 – Highways, Title 49 – Transportation, and Title 42 – The Public Health and Welfare. "....

Recommended Actions:

"The DOT encourages States, local governments,...and other government agencies, to adopt similar policy statements on bicycle and pedestrian accommodation as an indication of their commitment to

accommodating bicyclist and pedestrians as an integral element of the transportation system. "...Transportation agencies and local communities should go beyond minimum design standards.....Such action should include:

- Consider walking and bicycling as equals with other transportation modes...
- Ensuring that there are transportation choices for people of all ages and abilities, especially children...
- Going beyond minimum design standards...
- Integrating bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on new, rehabilitated, and limited-access bridges...
- Collecting data on walking and biking trips...
- Setting mode share targets for walking and bicycling and tracking them over time...
- Removing snow (and ice) from sidewalks and shared-use paths.
- Improving nonmotorized facilities during maintenance projects...

Increased commitment to and investment in bicycle facilities and walking networks can

help meet goals for cleaner, healthier air; less congested roadways; and more livable, safe, cost-efficient communities"....

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users August 25, 2005

The following quotes and excerpts from the U.S. Transportation Bill known as "SAFETEA-LU" summarize elements related to bicycle and pedestrian planning in the ARTS region:



"On August 10, 2005, the President signed into law the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). With guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation..., SAFETEA-LU represents the largest surface transportation investment in our Nation's history." (Overview, Page 2)

"SAFETEA-LU addresses the many challenges facing our transportation system today – challenges such as improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment..." (Overview, Page 2)

SAFETEA-LU contains targeted investment features with a focus on Safety, Equity, Innovative Finance, Congestion Relief, Mobility and Productivity, Efficiency, Environmental Stewardship, and Environmental Streamlining. (Overview, Page 2) In two of these targeted investment areas, Safety and Environmental Stewardship, funding is provided for programs that emphasize bicycle and pedestrian modes of travel. Under the Safety investment focus the Safe Routes to School program is created to "enable and encourage primary and secondary school children to walk and bicycle to school. Both infrastructure- related and behavioral projects will be geared toward providing a safe, appealing environment for walking and biking that will improve the quality of our children's lives and support national health objectives by reducing traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools." (Safe Routes to School, Page 9) Additionally, more funding is provided under the Environmental Stewardship investment focus that is geared toward bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure development. This focus area includes funding for recreational trails (Recreation Trails, Page, 16) and funding for a Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot program "to fund pilot projects to construct a network of nonmotorized transportation infrastructure facilities in four designated communities. The purpose is to demonstrate the extent to which walking and bicycling can represent a major portion of the transportation solution in certain communities." (Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot, Page 17)

State Plans/Polices

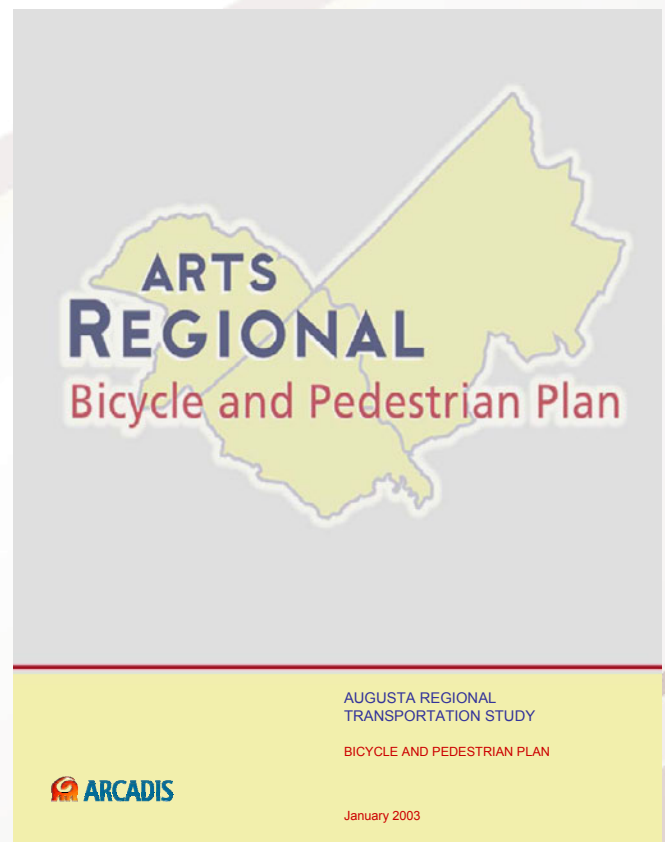
SC DOT Complete Streets Resolution 2003

The SC DOT Complete Streets Resolution states that "bicycling and walking accommodations are a routine part of the department's planning and design, construction and operating activities, and will be included in everyday operations" of the statewide transportation system.

SC DOT Engineering Directive Memorandum 22, Consideration for Bicycle Facilities 2003

This important document provides design guidelines for bicycle facilities within South Carolina Department of Transportation right of way. These guidelines are already referenced in plans reviewed for this background summary.

Regional Plans



ARTS Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2003

The 2003 ARTS Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was developed to provide policy guidance at the regional level. Three goals

were pursued as part of the study:

- Provide for a bicycle and pedestrian transportation network to serve local, community, and regional needs
- Promote the viability of walking and biking as a safe and healthy transportation option throughout the region for all potential users
- Identify appropriate and adequate funding for the development and maintenance of regional and local bicycle and pedestrian systems

The first goal implies coordination and connectivity with other planning agencies, such as the Lower Savannah COG.

ARTS 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan 2010

Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) functions as bi-state MPO and is responsible for transportation planning in accordance with the federal metropolitan planning requirements for Augusta-Richmond County and portions of Columbia County in Georgia, and portions of Aiken and Edgefield Counties in South Carolina. The cities in the Augusta Regional Transportation Study (ARTS) area include Augusta, Grovetown, Hephzibah, and Blythe in Georgia, and Aiken, North Augusta, and Burnetown in South Carolina.

The ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan is the long-range, financially-constrained transportation plan for the region that covers a planning horizon of 25 years. According to federal law, all LRTPs must be updated every four or five years depending on their MPOs air quality status: maintenance, nonattainment, or attainment. The ARTS LRTP must be updated every five years because it is currently considered in attainment for federal air quality standards.

The Goals and Objectives relevant to the ARTS/ Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian plan are as follows;

Table A-2: ARTS 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

Goal 3: Develop a transportation system that will allow effective mobility throughout the region and provide efficient movement of persons and goods

Objective 1: Provide a plan that works to relieve congestion and prevent it in the future.

Objective 4: Provide a plan which addresses consideration of non-motorized modes such as bicycles and pedestrians.

Goal 4: Develop a transportation system that will enhance the economic, social, and environmental fabric of the area, using resources wisely while minimizing adverse impacts

Objective 5: Provide a plan that reduces mobile emissions and meets air quality standards.

Goal 5: Promote efficient land use and development patterns to improve safety and economic vitality to meet existing and future multimodal transportation needs

Objective 2: Protect adequate rights-of-way in newly developing and redeveloping areas for pedestrian, bicycle, transit and roadways.

Objective 3: Promote new developments that provide efficient, balanced movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, buses and motor vehicles within, to and through the area.

Goal 6: Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users

Objective 1: Identify policies, plans and transportation improvements that address unsafe designs and conditions to increase safety for users.

Objective 2: Develop and maintain a transportation system that provides increased security of all of its users.

Goal 7: Continue to develop a multimodal transportation network that utilizes strategies for addressing congestion management and air quality issues in the ARTS region.

Objective 2: Encourage strategies that reduce mobile source emissions in an effort to improve air quality.

Objective 3: Continue to implement and promote strategies and policies such as system preservation, access management, managed lanes, travel demand management, mass transit, complete streets, and alternative transportation to improve congestion conditions.



County Plans

Aiken County SC Comprehensive Plan

The South Carolina Local Government Comprehensive Planning Enabling Act of 1994 requires all units of local government utilizing zoning or land use controls to complete and adopt a comprehensive plan. The law requires that an independent board of local citizens called a Planning Commission act as an advisory committee to the governing body on constructing and adopting the plan. The objectives of the planning process are to develop an inventory of the community's historical and existing conditions and trends and to develop goals and objectives regarding community growth and development.

These goals and objectives communicate the suggested policy directions for the local government. The goals and policies element of the Aiken Comprehensive Plan were developed through an extensive citizen participation program intended to accurately reflect the desires of county residents. Goals related to this bicycle and pedestrian plan include safe, pedestrian friendly neighborhoods, with facilities, transportation, and activities accessible to all; high quality streets, parking and pedestrian facilities; excellent public facilities including police, fire and schools; and intergovernmental cooperation.

The 2005 Comprehensive Plan became effective in June. The Goals and Policies of the plan elements relevant to bicycle and pedestrian planning are listed in Table A-3 below. The goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan are consistent with a sustainable Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan that uses a coordinated approach to address safety, design, maintenance and coordinated planning issues.

Table A-3: Aiken County Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies Relevant to Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning

Part 1 Population Element Goal: Control Urban Sprawl and development of rural and natural resource areas
Part 1 Population Element Goal: Promote an "age sensitive" environment – meet and accommodate changes in age and gender composition of county residents.
Recommendation 2: Provide pedestrian and/or public transportation linkages.
Part 3 Economic Element Goal: Create new economic markets to benefit from South Carolina's emerging Recreation – Retirement image.
Recommendation: To capitalize on state initiatives, the development of a more aggressive tourism promotion program is recommended, together with educational programs for individuals involved in tourism, and the integration of infrastructure development in support of tourism.
Part 5 Community Facilities Element Goal 2: Develop a transportation system that is financially feasible, with broad public support
Recommendation: Provide a plan which addresses bicycle and pedestrian needs.

Local Municipality Plans

The Westobou Vision Master Plan (Augusta and North Augusta Urban Area) 2009

The Westobou Vision 2009 Master Plan was created "to develop and realize a shared vision, for both Augusta and North Augusta, of what this location...can become and what it can provide...whether they want to enjoy it as a place to work, live or play." (Page 3)

The plan suggests the development of several market creation projects within the urban areas, but suggestions were also made for initiatives that should be pursue within the broader framework of the urban area. Some of these improvements include the following:

Integrated Green Corridors and Nodes – The Westobou Plan states that "Public open space is the loom upon which Westobou's urban design plan is woven." With a critical component being the "connection via



greenways, bike routes and streetscaping." It recommends not only the renovation of existing parks, but the creation of new parks and plazas. (Page 21)

Relocation/Modification/Removal of Problematic Public Infrastructure – The Westobou Plan highlights the need to address issues of problematic public infrastructure such as "highway interchanges, the eastern end of the J.C. Calhoun Expressway, and the railroad rights-of-way." (Page 21)

Comprehensive Transportation Planning Review – The plan recommends adjustments and improvements to the existing roadway networks, review of public infrastructure, as well as development of Bicycle and other alternative means of transportation in the urban area. (Page 21)

North Augusta Riverfront Redevelopment District Master Plan 1996

This plan proposed a Greenway network, using new and existing streets, comprised of dedicated bicycle and pedestrian routes. The plan identified regional connections, including those from South Carolina to Georgia via the Savannah River, including a connection to the canal bikeway system on or under the Georgia Avenue Bridge. One other potential connection recommended was the former rail bridge between Hamburg and Augusta near the Fifth Street Bridge. Several of these segments have since been implemented.

North Augusta Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan 2003

Recommendations related to walking and bicycling include:

- Develop approximately 6-8 miles of new Greenway and 6-8 miles of bikeway trails
- Expand the width of the Greenway Trail
- Increase the number of connections with schools and other public use areas (all parks should be connected via the Greenway)
- Develop paths along the river for viewing and interacting with the water

North Augusta Community Needs Assessment 2003

This assessment was performed in conjunction

with a Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan. Residents were surveyed regarding their bicycling and walking priorities. The top four park or facility types cited as being used most often were:

- Walking/biking trails/parks
- Riverview Park Activities Center
- Playgrounds
- Access to water bodies such as creeks and rivers

The top four additional facilities requested included:

- Walking and biking trails
- Recreation/activity center
- Playgrounds
- Water access

The top five facility improvements that survey respondents would support with tax dollars were:

- Continuing the northern Greenway expansion
- Increasing visibility of law enforcement in parks
- Addition of swimming pools
- Creating walking, jogging and biking trails
- Lighting of facilities

City of North Augusta Comprehensive Plan 2005

The following excerpts are relevant to the Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Greenway: Greenway extensions are major tributaries to the main Greenway Trail. Extensions will be developed to tie substantial pedestrian and bicycle neighborhoods and parks that include their own internal pedestrian circulation systems to the citywide system. Greenway connectors are shorter and generally narrower segments of trail that tie existing neighborhoods to the Greenway Trail. Both Greenway extensions and Greenway connectors will utilize drainage ways include the Boeckh Ravine system.

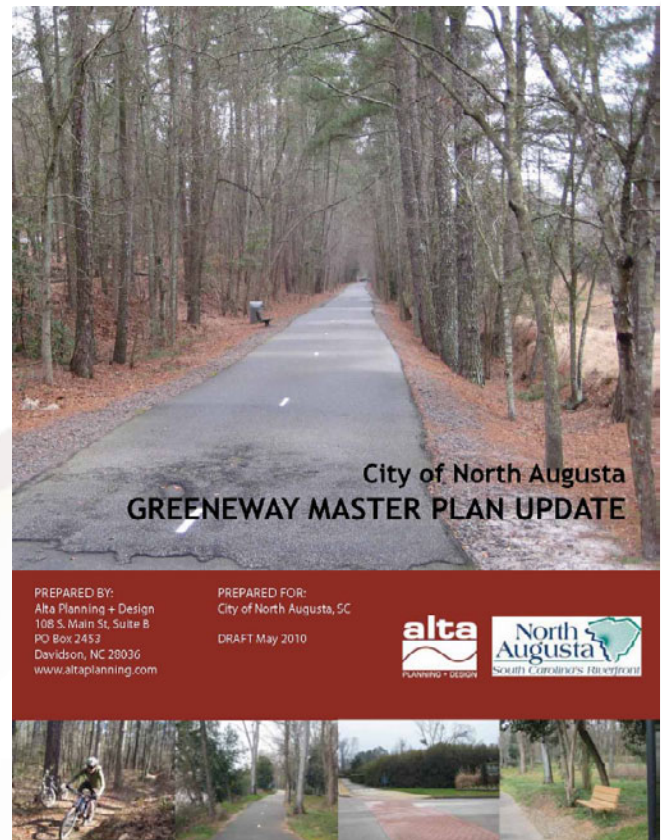


Sidewalks: a relatively extensive network of sidewalks is present with the older areas of the City, but there are very few in newer neighborhoods and commercial centers. Sidewalks are located along some sections of arterial and collector roads but do not complete a network that pedestrians can utilize. Sidewalks are noticeably absent in the vicinity of public schools.

Goals and Objectives: these goals and objectives are relevant to the Aiken County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

1. Consider development regulations that require all new residential and commercial developments to install sidewalks and Greenway extensions and connectors and to provide for adequate internal vehicular and pedestrian circulation, and external vehicular and pedestrian connectivity to adjacent developments, subdivisions and the Greenway (5.14.9)
2. Implement the citywide Greenway Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan that included the primary Greenway system, Greenway extensions and connectors, multi-purpose trails adjacent to arterials highways, sidewalks and share-the-road bicycle lanes. The plan will emphasize and prioritize connections to parks, school, commercial areas, churches and other public facilities and is designed to ultimately connect every neighborhood and commercial area in the City. (5.14.10)
3. Continue the program of retrofitting existing streets to provide a citywide sidewalk network where reasonable, economically feasible and regular use will occur. (5.14.12)
4. Evaluate "downsizing" or narrowing existing streets, including some collectors and arterials, to calm traffic and make them more pedestrian friendly where road and lane width is not necessary to carry current and projected traffic volumes (5.14.20)
5. Cooperate with Augusta-Richmond County, Columbia County, Aiken County and the Augusta Canal Authority to provide interstate connections between the North Augusta Greenway system, Augusta Riverwalk, the Augusta Canal Bikeway system and the Columbia County Bikeway System. (5.14.22)

6. Modify the subdivision and street design and construction standards to include minimum standards for street widths, block lengths, cul-de-sac lengths, street connectivity, trees, Greenway and other pedestrian connections, sidewalks (a minimum of 5 feet wide) and driveways. (6.13.9)
7. Develop design standards and regulations for sidewalks and street to ensure safety and mobility for pedestrians and bicycles. (9.13.12)



North Augusta Greenway, Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan 2011

This Plan proposes improvement projects that will create a comprehensive system of on-street and off-street bicycle and pedestrian improvements, including Greenway trails, multi-purpose trails, bike lanes and bike routes.

The North Augusta Greenway is a public multi-use trail, 13 miles in length and initially developed as a "Rails-to-Trails" project. Its unique name honors former North Augusta Mayor Thomas Greene, who was instrumental in the trail's creation. The current Greenway



network includes a number of extensions and connections to public facilities and neighborhoods and a five mile section that parallels the recently completed Palmetto Parkway (I-520).

Residents of North Augusta and the region who utilize the Greenway speak highly of the City's trail system. While the Greenway does provide excellent recreational opportunities, it is not directly connected to many desirable destinations in the community. Pedestrian and bicycle connectivity creates a more walkable community and can provide for alternative means of transportation as well as reduce dependency on automobiles. Improved connectivity will provide a circulation system that is more functional and safer.

City objectives for the Greenway, Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan are continued expansion of the trail with additional connections to neighborhoods, parks, schools, the new Palmetto Parkway segment, and further out into Aiken County, the City of Aiken and Richmond and Columbia Counties in Georgia.

City of Aiken 2010 Strategic Plan

This booklet contains action items based on the premise of the first strategic plan, created in 1992 "How would we survive a major reduction in the work force at the Savannah River Site?" Since 1992, the Strategic Plan has been continually updated, with the last version created in 2010. The short term action items listed within the plan are those that were perceived to be most immediately important to the citizens of Aiken. The plan establishes long term goals by phasing in larger projects over multiple budget years. The following short and long term goals are in line with the goals and objectives of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan:



Key Concern	Short Term Activities	Long Term Activities
Support Families and Family-Related Activities		Build more bicycle paths to connect with those already constructed
		Continue to install lighting, curbing, sidewalks and landscaping in appropriate areas of the city
Promote Environmental Stewardship	Re-establish the City Arboretum Trail	
	Interconnect our parkways with pedestrian friendly walkways	
	Promote alternative modes of transportation	
Connect Our Parkway with Pathways	Use results of our pilot Green Infrastructure Project to identify opportunities to interconnect our parkways	Support a feasibility study for most efficient means to connect our parkways
	Study communities' efforts to establish pedestrian-friendly infrastructure for city green spaces and pathways	Phase in, over several cycles, amenities that make our parkways pedestrian friendly
		Build additional bike paths
Transportation Opportunities	Find alternative transportation choices and promote them	Find alternatives to merely widening roads that are more cost effective

City of Aiken Greenways Plan 1994

Major corridors recommended for greenways/separate paths include a ring around the city comprised of SC HWY 118 and East Pine Log Road. Additional greenway recommendations are as follows:

Road Name	From	To
Audubon Drive	Two Notch Road	Powder House Road
Park Avenue	Hayne Avenue	Union Street
South Boundary Avenue	York Street	Fairfield Street
Gregg Avenue	Hudson Road	Seneca Road
University Parkway	Medical Park Drive	SC HWY 118
Silver Bluff Road	Sirius Drive	Hitchcock Parkway
Dougherty Road	Silver Bluff Road	Spaulding Drive
Whiskey Road	Eastgate Drive	Hillbrook Avenue
South Aiken Lane	Whiskey Road	East Pine Log Road

Please note that this plan has not been updated in 17 years and was not adopted by Council.